



The Northern Lights



The Consular Newsletter of United States Embassy Reykjavik

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SPECIAL JULY 4TH EDITION

JULY 4TH 2006: HONORING THE FOUNDERS, THANKING OUR HOSTS



Over 700 representatives of Icelandic government, business, media, universities and cultural institutions as well as invited members of the American community, attended the Embassy's July 4th reception at the Reykjavik Art Museum (Kjarvalsstaðir), hosted by Ambassador Carol van Voorst and her husband William A. Garland. Icelandic pop star Jónsi performed the Icelandic and U.S. anthems as well as popular U.S. songs. Eleven U.S.-affiliated companies sponsored this year's event.



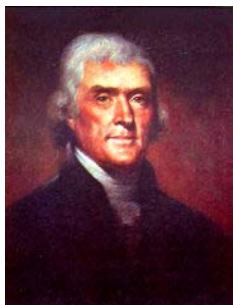
In remarks commemorating the 230th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Ambassador van Voorst said, *"It is easy to forget today what a revolutionary document the Declaration was. The 56 delegates to the Continental Congress who signed it were men of property and reputation, well known and respected.... What they wrote was much more than an announcement of political divorce from Great Britain. The electrifying, truly sensational assertion that 'all men are created equal' and have 'inalienable rights' to include 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' has echoed through the world to this day.. For Americans on the 4th, at some point between the food and the fireworks, there's time to remember what we believe in and to survey the work that lies ahead... Icelanders will not find any of this alien to their own history and values. I have not been in Iceland long, but an outsider doesn't need much time to realize what a remarkable country this is. A people whose ancestors set foot on the American continent long before Columbus, but kept that information to themselves, has got to be one of a kind. Your energetic and frank public debate on domestic and international issues is a model of free expression. Your concern for the welfare of those who do not have the good luck to live in a peaceful, orderly, and prosperous country like Iceland is felt by people in continents far from home."* *"My fellow Americans and I, here and in the States, value your partnership with our country," she added, "This longstanding friendship that has brought benefits of security, trade, and cultural ties to both nations."*

JULY 4TH 2007: CALLING ALL PICNIC PLANNERS

As in other countries, the Embassy's July 4 reception is an opportunity for us to repay the hospitality of local friends, and so the great majority of invitations go to our Icelandic contacts and partners. We wish we could invite all of the hundreds of Americans resident in Iceland to the official event, but this just isn't feasible. For 2007, however, the Embassy would like to support a traditional "Family Fourth" picnic open to all Americans and others, to complement the official reception. To do this, we need the help of dedicated volunteers from the wider American community in the Reykjavik area. If you would care to join this noble effort, please e-mail us at reykjavikconsular@state.gov.. Your fellow Americans will thank you!



REMEMBERING THOMAS JEFFERSON



As we celebrate our nation's independence, it seems only fitting to pay tribute to the man who penned one of our most cherished documents, the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Jefferson (April 13, 1743 – July 4, 1826) was the third President of the United States (1801-1809), principal author of the Declaration of Independence (1776), and an influential founder of the United States. Major events during his presidency include the Louisiana Purchase (1803), the Embargo Act (1807), and the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806).

A political philosopher who promoted classical liberalism, republicanism, and the separation of church and state, he was the author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1779, 1786), which was the basis of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. He founded the Democratic-Republican Party, which dominated American politics for over a quarter-century. Jefferson also served as the second Governor of Virginia (1779-1781), the first United States Secretary of State (1789-1793), and second Vice President (1797-1801).

In addition to his political career, Jefferson was an agriculturalist, horticulturalist, architect, etymologist, archaeologist, mathematician, cryptographer, surveyor, paleontologist, author, lawyer, inventor, violinist, and the founder of the University of Virginia. Many people consider Thomas Jefferson to be among the most brilliant men ever to occupy the Presidency. President John F. Kennedy welcomed forty-nine Nobel Prize winner to the White House in 1962, saying "I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent, of knowledge, that has ever been gathered at the White House, with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone."

NOTABLE EVENTS THAT OCCURRED ON JULY 4TH

1776 - American Revolutionary War: The Continental Congress approves a Declaration of Independence.

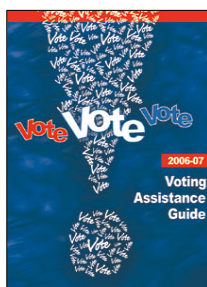
1802 - The United States Military Academy opens in West Point, New York.

1803 - The Louisiana Purchase (which doubled the size of the United States) is announced to the American people.

1939 - Baseball great Lou Gehrig, recently diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, tells a crowd at Yankee Stadium that he considered himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth" as he announces his retirement.

1966 - President Lyndon Johnson signs the Freedom of Information Act into law, improving access to once secret government information for academics, journalists, and other citizens.

1997 - NASA's Pathfinder lands on Mars.



PREPARE NOW FOR THE 2006 U.S. ELECTIONS

2006 is a U.S. election year. U.S. citizens overseas are eligible to participate in primary, run-off, and special elections throughout the year, as well as the November general election. A calendar of election dates is available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/primarycal.html>.

We encourage citizens to register to vote and to request absentee ballots **as early as possible** to ensure you receive all ballots for which you are eligible. To ask the Consular staff about absentee voting, e-mail reykjavikconsular@state.gov or call 562-9100.

JULY 4TH FACTOIDS

Both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only two men to sign the Declaration of Independence and to become President, passed away on the same day: July 4th, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the United States.

One colorful annual Independence Day event is the Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest in Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York City, which supposedly started on July 4, 1916 as a way to settle a dispute among four immigrants as to who was the most patriotic. On July 4, 2006 alone, it was estimated that Americans would consume about 150 million hot dogs.

The town of Bristol, Rhode Island is noted for having America's oldest continuous Independence Day celebration.

Every Fourth of July the Liberty Bell is tapped – not actually rung.

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the U.S. Department of State – the equivalent of what most countries call a ministry of foreign affairs – is to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.

With this goal in mind, the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik works with leaders, institutions, and citizens of the U.S. and Iceland to maintain and broaden the close political, economic, security, cultural, and personal ties between the United States and Iceland.

ORGANIZATION

The Embassy is staffed by 12 American and 35 locally engaged employees of the Department of State, divided into several sections:

Executive Office: The Ambassador, also known as the Chief of Mission, is the personal representative of the President of the United States to the government and people of Iceland. A Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) manages the daily business of the Embassy on behalf of the Ambassador. If an Ambassador's term has ended, the DCM acts as Chargé d'Affaires pending a new Ambassador's arrival. Two American office managers and an Icelandic protocol assistant round out the Executive Office staff.

The **Consular Section** provides a full range of services to American citizens and the traveling public, including emergency assistance to American citizens in distress, U.S. passport processing, Immigrant and Non-immigrant Visa adjudication and processing, Federal Benefits, Assistance to Veterans, Notarial Services, and Voting Assistance.

The Embassy **Economic-Commercial Section** promotes opportunities for American business in Iceland. This includes helping U.S. companies already active in Iceland or seeking to enter this market as well as assisting Icelanders interested in buying products and services from the U.S. The section also reports to the U.S. government on developments in the Icelandic economy, and works with the Icelandic government on multilateral and bilateral economic issues and initiatives.

The **Political Section** analyzes and reports on local political developments, promotes U.S. policy objectives and encourages Icelandic policy decisions that support U.S. interests. The section maintains contact with host government officials, politicians, non-governmental organization leaders, and other influential citizens of Iceland.

The **Public Affairs Section** manages press relations with the Icelandic media, provides information about U.S. society & culture to the Icelandic public, and explains U.S. policies to opinion makers and Icelandic citizens in general. It promotes the best of American culture in Iceland, encourages educational and professional exchange among Icelanders and Americans, and advises the Ambassador and other members of the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik on issues of public diplomacy.

The **Management Section** provides financial management, human resources, communications and logistics support for the Embassy. The section also manages procurement and contracting functions. The section is responsible for bilateral issues such as diplomatic accreditation, diplomatic reciprocity and taxation.

The **Regional Security Officer (RSO)** is a Diplomatic Security Service Special Agent. The RSO and staff advises the Ambassador on security issues, coordinate the Embassy's security program, provides information to U.S. firms, and support U.S. and Icelandic law enforcement agencies involved in joint investigations, training, and information exchange.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER U.S. AGENCIES

The Embassy draws support from representatives of other U.S. government agencies in the region or in Washington. These non-resident colleagues coordinate with the Embassy and with the government of Iceland through periodic visits, videoconferences, and other contacts, on such topics as:

Trade. The Economic-Commercial Section works closely with regional representatives of the Department of Commerce and Department of Agriculture, based at Embassy Stockholm and Embassy The Hague respectively, and with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative in Washington.

Environment, Science, & Technology. The Economic-Commercial Section also coordinates with the State Department's regional Environment, Science & Technology officer based in Copenhagen, and with Washington-based scientific agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Geological Survey, and NASA.

Defense. The U.S.-led Iceland Defense Force based at Naval Air Station Keflavik works closely with the Embassy on all issues related to the bilateral U.S.-Iceland defense relationship. The Defense Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Oslo provides Embassy Reykjavik with expertise on military arrangements, operations, and assistance.

Law Enforcement & Counterterrorism. The Regional Security Officer is the primary liaison with the Icelandic police and obtains support from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Drug Enforcement Administration based in nearby countries.

Immigration. On all immigration-related issues, the Consular Section is the primary liaison with Icelandic authorities, as well as the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other government agencies.

Together, the Ambassador, Deputy Chief of Mission, and section chiefs are referred to as the **Country Team**.

EMBASSY OFFICERS

Ambassador
Carol Van Voorst

Deputy Chief Of Mission
Philip S. Kosnett

Consular Officer
Ronald E. Hawkins, Jr.

Defense Attaché
Captain James Stevens,
U.S. Navy (based in Oslo)

Economic-Commercial Officer
Fiona Evans

Management Officer
Ryan Boera (Acting)

Political Officer
Brad Evans

Public Affairs Officer
Sally Hodgson

Regional Security Officer
Peter A. Dinoia

USEFUL LINKS FOR AMERICANS ABROAD

General Travel Information
www.travel.state.gov

Travel Warnings

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_page_tw/tw_1764.html

Useful Tips

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html

Documents Needed for Travel

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/requirements/requirements_1233.html

How to Register Your Travel

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_1186.html

CALLING TALENTED AMERICANS

Of course you are all talented Americans.

The Embassy is putting together lists of Americans living in Iceland who are willing to volunteer to share their expertise/talents in outreach programs designed to share American culture with our Icelandic hosts and to strengthen our American community.

If you might be interested in volunteering some time in the future to share a bit of America with Icelanders (and your fellow Americans) please e-mail reykjavikconsular@state.gov with your name, contact information and area of expertise/talent. We are looking for all kinds - entertainers, athletes, artists, designers, writers, academics, scientists. Whatever talent you've got, we'd like to hear about it.

ACCESS AMERICA VIA THE EMBASSY WEBSITE

Have you visited the Embassy website at: <http://reykjavik.usembassy.gov>? We offer information on Embassy services, U.S. government news and policies, links to U.S. websites, and more.

DR. TERRY G. LACY RECEIVES 2006 COBB PARTNERSHIP AWARD



*Dr. Lacy, Ambassador Cobb,
and Ambassador van Voorst*

U.S. citizen and long-time Iceland resident Dr. Terry G. Lacy was presented with the 2006 Cobb Partnership Award for work in fostering U.S. relations with Iceland and the building of bridges between the two countries at a reception June 26 hosted by U.S. Ambassador Carol van Voorst and her husband William A. Garland. Former U.S. Ambassador to Iceland Charles E. Cobb travelled to Iceland to join Ambassador van Voorst in making the presentation. Ambassador Cobb and his wife, Ambassador Sue McCourt Cobb, created the Award in 1991 to honor Americans who have contributed to strengthening bilateral ties with Iceland. The U.S.-Icelandic Fulbright Commission selects a recipient biannually.

Dr. Lacy has been a translator, editor, and a University of Iceland instructor. She is the author or co-author of 16 publications including the Icelandic cultural history *Ring of Seasons*, the novel *Raven Gunnar*, and bilingual business dictionaries. She was a Fulbright Senior Lectureship in Social Sciences at the University of Iceland in 1973-74. Before arriving in Iceland, she studied music history at Smith College and, under Smith's auspices, studied a year at the University of Florence, living with an Italian family who became lifelong friends. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Smith in 1948 with a B.A. in music history. From Colorado State University she received an M.S. in sociology in 1968 and a PhD in sociology in 1972. Her deep interest in islands and island living, in cultural differences and languages, and in Iceland in particular led her to make her home in Reykjavik. "Living in Iceland," she says, "has been an adventure, sometimes a strong challenge, and always a satisfying and rewarding experience."